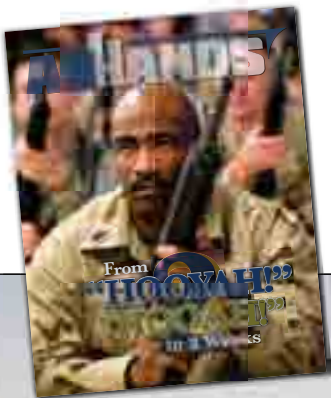


MAY 2010

ALL HANDS

MAGAZINE OF THE U.S. NAVY

From
“HOOYAH!”
“HOOAH!”
in 3 Weeks



[On the Front Cover]

YNC(SW) Derrick Law along with his shipmates are attending the three-week U.S. Navy Individual Augmentee Combat Training at McCrady Training Center, Fort Jackson, S.C., to bolster their weapons-handling ability and confidence through extensive familiarization training and live-fire exercises. The training is designed to prepare Sailors for upcoming support assignments and individual augmentees deployments.

Photo by MC1(AW) R. Jason Brunson

From “HOOYAH!” to “HOOAH!” in Three Weeks

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The Army at McCrady Training Center, Ft. Jackson, S.C., works hand-in-hand with the Naval Expeditionary Combat Readiness Center, Norfolk, to ensure individual augmentee Sailors receive the training they need to better augment Army once they arrive on station.

Photo by MC1(AW) R. Jason Brunson



IT2 Donald Acker from Augusta, Kan., calls home to say goodbye to wife on his last evening at Fort Jackson, S.C.



AIMD Atsugi

Operational Diversity

A diverse group of Sailors from countries spanning the globe are as integral to Commander, Fleet Air Western Pacific, Aircraft Intermediate Maintenance Det., Atsugi, Japan, as the nuts and bolts used on the aircraft they keep operational.



EFMP

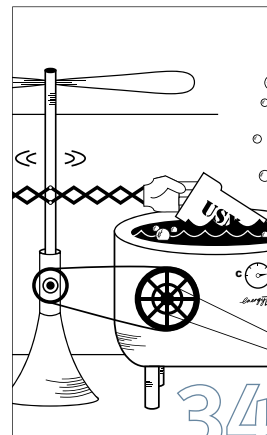
Exceptional Family Member Program

More than 16,000 U.S. Navy family are enrolled in the program that maintains continuity of care for special needs family members and alleviates service members' concerns about their family and career.

Photo by MC1(SW) Bruce Cummins

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[Next Month]

All Hands reports on Exercise Key Resolve, cornerstone of cooperation and security in the Pacific.





QMSN Matthew Rivera, from Mount Bethel, Penn., signals to Sailors aboard USS *Carl Vinson* (CVN 70) from USS *Bunker Hill* (CG 52) while conducting an underway replenishment during *Southern Seas 2010*.

Photo by MC2 Daniel Barker

Shipmates Helping Shipmates

For the past few years approximately 32 million Americans have been of prime recruiting age for military service. Of that 32 million, about 6 million meet military eligibility standards. Of that 6 million, the Navy only selects about 40,000 volunteers a year. That means less than .125 percent of recruiting-age Americans are welcomed into the service to wear our uniform and represent themselves, their family, those who have served before and their nation. With that privilege comes responsibility.

Our junior Sailors – both officer and enlisted – are our dominant number, so to maintain a dominant force, we need to use their numbers to sustain a healthy and progressive Navy.

Today's junior Sailors are amazing. Their skills, ideas and talents go far beyond collar devices or shoulder patches when we tap into their knowledge and allow them to exercise their skills to make positive impacts on the force.

For example, a group of young Sailors in Region Mid-Atlantic initiated the Coalition of Sailors Against Destructive Decisions (CSADD), a proactive peer-to-peer mentoring program that enables junior Sailors to address the many life issues that may impact their future success.

Many successful CSADD chapters throughout the Navy tackle issues such as drinking, reckless driving, recreational safety, fraternization and other potentially destructive situations to assist Sailors in making positive decisions. CSADD offers peer instruction through constructive and dynamic training on best practices, and intervention tools to deal with life's issues.

An example of CSADD in action is the "Stop and Think" campaign established through the founding CSADD chapter in Norfolk. Sailors developed and presented a dynamic event about drunk driving which incorporated the funeral honor guard, audience engagement and provided attendees with an automobile ventilation air freshener inscribed with the phrase "Stop and Think." The air freshener serves as a visual reminder that prompts Sailors to take a few seconds and think about the impact of the decisions they make behind the wheel.



The campaign resonated with the audience and emphasized that safety is not just about keeping you safe from something, but is about keeping you safe for something in your future.

CSADD chapters have experienced impressive success because the programs are led and managed by deckplate Sailors who are uniquely able to present information in a way which appeals to their peers. Furthermore, CSADD enables our junior Sailors for future success by providing leadership opportunities. The program is a powerful tool which brings awareness to key resources and programs to foster positive decisions made on and off duty.

If you don't have a chapter at your command, I encourage you to start one. Many chapters begin with a handful of dedicated and motivated Sailors. The same caliber of Sailor who is chosen from a pool of 6 million to wear a uniform, take an oath and execute a mission.

The Navy thrives because we work as a team. The combined effort of our force, the leadership of our seniors and the action of our juniors is what we are all about - shipmates helping shipmates be successful. 🇺🇸

Information about how to begin a CSADD chapter is available on the Coalition of Sailors Against Destructive Decisions Facebook page.

ALL HANDS

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www.navy.mil

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**GUN SAFETY RULE #
NEVER POINT A WEAPON
AT ANYTHING YOU DON'T
INTEND TO SHOOT**



EVERYBODY KNOWS THAT, RIGHT?



Then why **DO THEY KEEP SHOOTING
THEMSELVES, OTHERS,
BULKHEADS AND FLOORS?**

WWW.SAFETYCENTER.NAVY.MIL





Photo by MCA Eddie Harrison

Sailors competing for Sailor of the Year at Commander, Fleet Logistics Wing, stretch before group physical training.

Navy Introduces New Fitness, Nutrition Program at Annual Health Seminar

The U.S. Navy recently partnered with Athletes' Performance Institute (API), to introduce the Navy Operational Fitness and Fueling Series (NOFFS) at the 49th annual Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Conference in Hampton, Va.

The program is aimed at building operational performance in the fleet and includes tools for Sailors to improve their physical fitness and overall nutrition. Built on five pillar preps of eat clean, eat often, hydrate, recover and mindset, NOFFS allows individuals who once were stumped at the notion of building effective eating habits and exercise routines the ability to jump-start their performance by selecting foods and exercises that will help them meet the daily demands of their operational duties.

"NOFFS is a complete workout and nutritional program that will eliminate the guess work for Sailors so they can go about their daily fitness routines without having to seek someone out to help them," said Lisa Sexauer, program manager of fitness and injury prevention for Commander, Navy Installations Command.

The Navy will roll the program and its resources out to the fleet in June 2010, and it will become part of the command fitness leader course in 2011.

"The program will take us into a whole new realm of physical readiness in the Navy," said Sexauer. "It's certainly a departure from what has become familiar within our general population; it's far more contemporary and will accentuate our ability to perform at a higher level operationally with greater durability and less risk for injury."

The Navy and API have been working together for eight years to improve physical readiness throughout the fleet.

"We have taken a comprehensive approach working with the Navy including looking at the strength program, warm-up and cardiovascular fitness demands of a Sailor," said Paul Cauldwell, performance specialist, API. "We also looked at the nutritional needs a Sailor has both abroad and while they are deployed. We wanted to ensure that the training we developed fits their lives just like we do for professional athletes."

Cauldwell added that the overall goal is to decrease Sailor injuries based on a sedentary lifestyle.

"We noticed a lack of consistency across the board in our research," said Cauldwell. "We want to bring that to the fleet. Ultimately, we want to take care of the Navy's biggest asset, its Sailors."

Once the program hits the fleet, Sailors will have menus, nutrition rules and food or "fuel" information at their fingertips. After conducting several focus groups on various platforms in the fleet, officials de-

terminated that enclosing the science of proper exercise and nutrition in a handy booklet was the best way to go to ensure that Sailors can understand and easily apply the fundamentals of a healthy diet and exercise to their lives.

For more information about the NOFFS program, visit www.nmcphe.med.navy.mil/Healthy_Living/Physical_Fitness/NOFFS.aspx. 📖

*Story by MC2 Kim Williams
assigned to Navy Public Affairs
Support Element East, Norfolk.*

New Policy Changes for Navy's Voluntary Education Programs

The chief of naval personnel recently released NAVADMIN 105/10 that reflects several changes to Navy education priorities, including guidance for the management of off-duty voluntary education programs.

Among the primary changes outlined are the requirement for individual education plans prior to enrollment in courses funded by Tuition Assistance (TA) or the Navy College Program for Afloat College Education (NCPACE), the elimination of funding for courses expressed in clock hours and the restriction of TA and NCPACE usage for new accession Sailors during their first permanent duty station.

"Navy leadership is committed to providing opportunities and financial assistance to Sailors as they pursue their educational goals," said Vice Adm. Mark Ferguson, chief of naval personnel. "Our highest priority is to reward Sailors who are responsible, plan ahead and who are good financial stewards of Navy's education funds."

Individual education plans will be required by all Sailors who plan to use TA. These plans serve as an essential guide for Sailors as they pursue their education goals, listing courses, American

Council on Education (ACE) credits and Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES) academic testing applicable to completing select degree programs.

Education plans will also help Sailors identify which courses are best achieved within the allotted 16 semester hour cap, and must be on file with the Navy College Office (NCO) prior to enrollment in college courses funded with TA or through NCPACE. Students will no longer be able to complete five courses prior to completion of the education plan.

"It's important to remember that as Sailors train, they can also earn credits toward college degrees," said Navy's Voluntary Education Director, Dr. Mary Redd-Clary. "Our Navy College counselors review these credits against Sailors' education plans and degree programs. This helps minimize the time a Sailor spends attending courses, while sensibly managing Navy education funds."

DANTES tests for college credit and ACE recommended credits ensure Sailors are able to complete degree requirements in a timely manner. Currently, Sailors both ashore and afloat, can enroll in rating related distance learning degrees offered by any one of 34 Navy College Program Distance Learning Partnership schools.

Additionally, the NAVADMIN announces TA and NCPACE funding will only be authorized for academic courses expressed in semester or quarter hours and lead to technical, associate's, bachelor's, master's or doctorate degrees. These courses are readily available at accredited colleges and universities world-wide and priced within the current DoD cap of \$250 per semester hour or \$166.67 per quarter hour.

To provide Sailors with adequate time to become familiar with the command, their job requirements and progress towards



Sarah Porter (left) and ET2(SW) David Porter stand on either side of Jamillah Richardson after recalling the night Richardson stopped breathing.

Shipmates

NCTS Jacksonville Sailor Saves Woman's Life

Remember the last time that you were "volun-told" to attend cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training, and it conflicted with your schedule or you just did not want to go? Perhaps, you have calculated the odds of actually having to use CPR and realize you are more likely to be struck by lightning. These odds recently caught up to a young Jacksonville couple.

Electronics Technician 2nd Class (SW) David Porter, assigned to Naval Computer and Telecommunications Station (NCTS) Jacksonville, Fla., and his wife Sara, were enjoying a typical night at home when they received a call for help. Their 26-year-old upstairs neighbor Jamillah Richardson was having trouble breathing and asked Sarah, a registered nurse at Orange Park Medical Center, to come check on her. David Porter accompanied his wife.

When they arrived Richardson was taking shallow breaths and appeared unresponsive. The couple helped Richardson to the ground and immediately recognized that she had no pulse and was not breathing. David called 911, sent the victim's two young children, ages 2 and 5, into the living room and began performing CPR. Sarah handled the rescue breathing and David performed the chest compressions. They continued until emergency services arrived and rushed the victim to the hospital.

Today, Richardson is in good spirits, having survived the ordeal and is now safely back at home with her family. Richardson said she "has a new appreciation for life" and is very thankful to have what she calls, "our little angels downstairs."

True heroism surfaces when people do the right thing. When asked if he felt like a hero, Porter replied, "We just did what anyone else would do in that situation."

Within 24 hours of saving his neighbor's life, Porter helped a man push his car to a gas station and later jump-started a stranded stranger's car.

Porter just calls himself an "ordinary guy," but according to the Sailors he works with, his actions and overall attitude are in fact, extraordinary. 📖

Story and photo by ET2(SW/AW) Antonio Valerio, NCTS Jacksonville, Fla.

continued on page 9

Around the Fleet



Photo by MC2 Jonathan A. Rhinehart

EOD1 Eddie Sharpe, assigned to Explosive Ordnance Disposal Mobile Unit 11, deployed as a part of Combined Task Group 56.1, begins resurfacing after retrieving training aids while conducting dive equipment familiarization and training operations in the Red Sea.

OSSN Enrique Sanchez mans the rails aboard USS *Dewey* (DDG 105) during the ship's commissioning ceremony at Seal Beach Naval Weapons Station, Calif.

MM1 Jay Hinton mans the rails with his son and other Sailors on the flight deck of USS *Nimitz* (CVN 68) following a "Tiger Cruise" as the ship transits into her homeport at Naval Base Coronado, Calif.

Sailors assigned to USS *Florida* (SSGN 728), Navy Recruiting District and Navy Operational Support Center compete in a volleyball tournament at Adventure Island waterpark, Tampa, Fla. The tournament was part of Tampa Bay Navy Week, the first of 20 Navy Weeks planned across America in 2010.



warfare qualifications, officer and enlisted new accessions are now required to have one year onboard their first permanent duty station before TA or NCPACE funds will be authorized. Sailors currently enrolled in TA or NCPACE and have served less than a year at their first Permanent Duty Station are exempt from this requirement as long as they remain eligible for program benefits.

According to Redd-Clary, there are many factors that must be considered in order for Sailors to successfully complete their degree requirements. That is why it's so important for Sailors to seek the guidance of Navy College counselors at their local NCO.

"I can not emphasize enough the value of discussing your goals with an education counselor," said Redd-Clary. "Once you've established this plan you can track your progress under the 'MyEducation' tab on the Navy College Web site."

To read the NAVADMIN, visit www.npc.navy.mil/NR/rdonlyres/E8692AF5-13E3-4C7C-9414-3677C064A49E/0/NAV10105.txt. 📄

Story courtesy of the Chief of Naval Personnel, Washington, D.C.

Motorcycle Training May Save Money

Naval Safety Center reminds service members about the importance of motorcycle safety as more riders take advantage of the warmer weather.

Most riders have learned that training saves lives and have benefitted from the free courses offered by the military.

But not everyone knows that training also saves money. In an effort to help the Navy and Marine Corps reduce fatalities resulting from motorcycle crashes, many insurance companies offer discounts

to riders who complete a motorcycle training course.

"Most insurance companies provide a 10 percent discount to people who have taken the Basic Rider Course," said Don Borkoski, the motorcycle manager at the Naval Safety Center.

The issue of training garnered a lot of attention in FY08, when 33 Sailors and 25 Marines were killed on motorcycles. Most of those service members died on sport bikes. That is why the Naval Safety Center worked with the Motorcycle Safety Foundation to create the Military Sportbike Rider Course (MSRC), which began training students in June of 2008.

"The emphasis on training – and training targeted to sport bike riders in particular – paid off. In FY09, 13 Sailors and 14 Marines died on motorcycles. This is still too many, but a big improvement nonetheless," Borkoski said.

Some insurance companies now offer an additional 5 percent discount to riders who have taken the MSRC. They offer the discount as an incentive to get Sailors and Marines to take the training that could save their lives and reduce the likelihood of an accident, Borkoski said. That makes it a win for riders, who are getting into fewer accidents, and a win for the insurance companies, who are paying out fewer claims.

But, Borkoski said these discounts may expire after two or three years.

"That's something a lot of people don't know," he said. "But if you retake the training, you get to keep the discount, and in most cases, it just takes a phone call to the agency."

This is in line with the Navy's requirement for follow-on training every three years, a policy that acknowledges the fact that riding skills are perishable.

When it comes to insurance, discounts aren't the only thing

Sailors and Marines don't know about, Borkoski said. He said he's seen plenty of cases where someone buys a new motorcycle, only to find out after the fact that he or she can't afford the insurance.

"If you're buying a new motorcycle, shop for insurance first," he said. "In some cases, the insurance payment is more than the bike payment, and if you're not ready, that can be a shock."

He said that insurance premiums are typically tied to engine size and the type of motorcycle. Typically, sportbikes cost more to insure than cruisers, because of the higher number of claims and the cost of each claim.

"If you drop a sport bike, even at five or 10 miles per hour, you're looking at a minimum of \$3,000 to \$4,000 in damages," Borkoski said.

He recommends Sailors and Marines do research before buying and insuring motorcycles.

"Decide what kind of bike you think you want and then call the insurance company before you do anything else," he said. "Make sure to ask about what discounts they offer and then get trained." 📄

Story by April Phillips, assigned to the Naval Safety Center, Norfolk.

CSS Adds More LaDRs to Career Success

The Center for Service Support (CSS) in Newport, R.I., recently reached a major professional milestone when it officially uploaded all Learning and Development Roadmaps (LaDRs) for enlisted Sailors in the administrative, logistics and media ratings.

The LaDRs were designed to align a Sailor's required skills with his or her career goals. Each LaDR offers Sailors an overview of what is required from progression from E-1 to E-9 and can be used by leaders during career development

Photo by MCx Chad J. McNeely

Photo by MCx Ashley Myers

Photo by MCx Gary Ward

Around the Fleet



Photo by MCSN Aaron Shelley

An E-2C *Hawkeye* and F/A-18s fly in formation during an air demonstration for Argentinean visitors aboard USS *Carl Vinson* (CVN 70), while off the coast of Argentina in support of *Southern Seas 2010*.

LSC De'Andre Allen, from Jacksonville, Fla., proctors the Navywide petty officer 3rd class advancement exam at Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka, Japan. Test takers are given three hours to complete the 200-question multiple-choice exam.

Seabees assigned to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 74, Helmand Province, Afghanistan, participate in the Marine Corps Martial Arts Program.

BM2 Chris Briggs (center), from Dunnellon, Fla., signals to Sailors aboard USS *Nassau* (LHA 4) to hold position as BMSN Leo Biggs (right) from St. Joseph, Miss., signals to USNS *Robert E. Peary* (T-AKE 5) during a replenishment-at-sea.





Photo by MC3 Charles Oki



Photo by MC2 Michael Lindsey



Photo by MCSN Jonathan Pankau

boards to provide a navigable, rate-specific guide.

"It was with a great sense of pride and accomplishment that we here at CSS successfully completed the first phase of the roadmaps," said Chris Leahy, CSS LaDR program manager and retired chief petty officer. "These roadmaps are living documents and will require regular maintenance and updates as cutting-edge information comes available. We here at CSS are extremely proud of the products we have provided to the administrative, logistics and media ratings. And, we are standing by to ensure the continuation of our efforts."

Rating representatives assigned to the different Navy centers, such as the CSS, are required to review the LaDRs annually, but can update as required if something changes within the year.

CSS welcomes feedback on the LaDRs; such feedback should be sent via the Sailor's chain of command and the Enlisted Learning and Development Strategy page found on Navy Knowledge Online (NKO), the same page where the LaDRs are available for download.

"Sailors at all levels should familiarize themselves with their assigned LaDR and seek guidance from their chain of command," Leahy added. "Chief petty officers should ensure they are using the LaDRs, also referred to as roadmaps, to counsel their Sailors formally through career development boards and informally through day-to-day interactions. The ultimate responsibility, however, lies with the individual Sailor who should use the roadmap as a career guide."

In addition to providing Navy career advice, LaDRs also highlight a wide variety of education opportunities, including tuition assistance, Navy College Program for Afloat College Education, rating-relevant degrees and scholarship

programs, as well as certification and licenses supported through the Navy Credentialing Opportunities On-line and United Services Military Apprenticeship Program.

For more information about LaDRs, review OPNAV Instruction 1500.77 and visit the NKO LaDRs page at www.nko.navy.mil. The LaDRs can be found under the career management tab. 📖

Story courtesy of the Center for Service Support, Newport, R.I.

New Drugs, Same Navy Policy - Zero Tolerance

With the emerging popularity of designer drugs, the Navy has underscored its zero tolerance drug abuse policy by recently establishing new guidelines in NAVADMIN 108/10.

The NAVADMIN's bottom line is that the Navy's drug abuse policy is unwavering and states any member who is found to be unlawfully using, possessing, promoting, manufacturing or distributing drugs or drug abuse paraphernalia will be disciplined and administratively separated.

"Navy's drug abuse policy isn't new, and such policies are vital to the success of our Sailors and the Navy," said Master Chief Scott Benning, fleet master chief of manpower, personnel, training and education. "Our Sailors are entrusted with the highest levels

of responsibility even at the most junior levels, and we need them to be ready for action, able to make good decisions and thinking clearly 24 hours a day."

Nationally, designer drugs, which are created in the likeness of known narcotics such as heroin and cocaine but have not acquired the same negative reputation or scrutiny, are gaining more attention. The Navy message informs Sailors of the dangers associated with such substances with a strong reminder that the service's drug abuse policy not only applies to illicit drugs but to any substance that can be used with the intention to induce intoxication, excitement or stupefaction of the central nervous system.

During FY09, the Navy separated more than 1,300 Sailors for drug abuse and more than 300 Sailors have been separated since the beginning of FY10.

"We never want to lose a Sailor because of a destructive decision, which is why the Navy not only provides policy, we provide options," said Benning. "Our newest initiative, which is intended to expand Navywide, is the Coalition of Sailors Against Destructive Decisions, a peer-mentoring program which promotes good decision making processes and enables leadership development at the most junior levels." 📖

Story by William Cullen James, Navy Personnel Command, Millington, Tenn.

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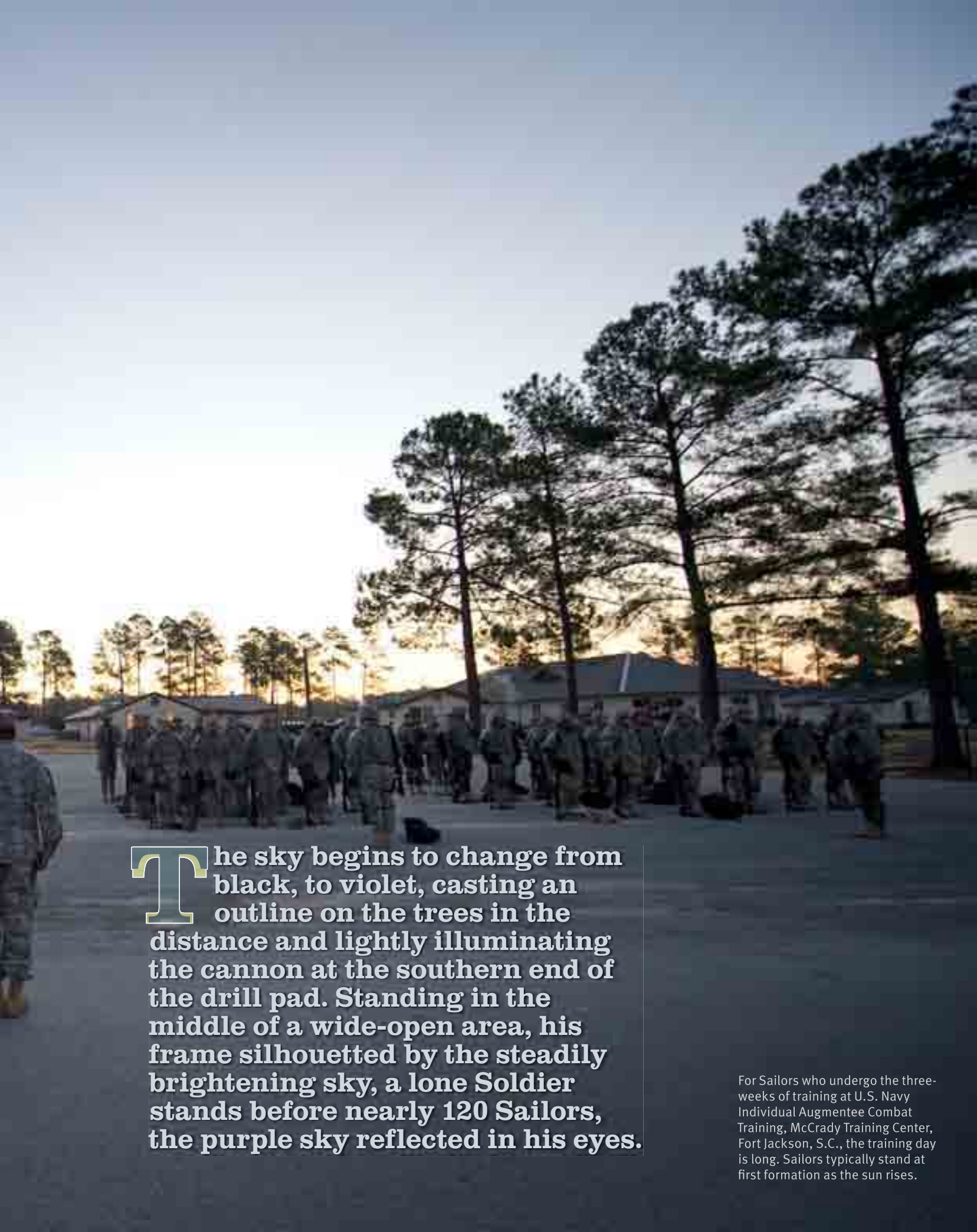
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From “HOOYAH!” “HOOAH!” in 3 Weeks

Story by MC2(SW) Elizabeth Vlahos | Photos by MC1(AW) R. Jason Brunson





The sky begins to change from black, to violet, casting an outline on the trees in the distance and lightly illuminating the cannon at the southern end of the drill pad. Standing in the middle of a wide-open area, his frame silhouetted by the steadily brightening sky, a lone Soldier stands before nearly 120 Sailors, the purple sky reflected in his eyes.

For Sailors who undergo the three-weeks of training at U.S. Navy Individual Augmentee Combat Training, McCrady Training Center, Fort Jackson, S.C., the training day is long. Sailors typically stand at first formation as the sun rises.



Purple. The color represents the joint blending of the Navy, Army, Air Force and Marine Corps on the DoD palette.

Scores of individual augmentee (IA) Sailors face this scene every year, from the moment the bus rolls through the gates of McCrady Training Center, Fort Jackson, S.C., until they depart for the next step of the journey. The next three weeks will be a crash course in the United States Army – which is exactly what the Sailors will need to work seamlessly with the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines they will support upon arriving at their destination.

The Army works hand-in-hand with the Naval Expeditionary Combat Readiness Center (ECRC) to ensure these Sailors receive the training they need to better augment the Army once they arrive on station.

100 Percent Ready to Go

ECRC is responsible for providing training and administrative support for the Sailors attending Navy IA Combat Training (NIACT). The ECRC detachment at Fort Jackson trains nearly 45 percent of the Navy's IAs, though contrary to what many may think, this training is not isolated to just combat skills. During their time at Fort Jackson, Sailors also make sure all their personal affairs are in order, from their Page 2 information to any issues their families might face while they're serving in theater.

"We want to make sure that everyone is, trained and equipped to go forward into theater without becoming a burden on the operational commander. They have to be 100 percent ready to go," said Capt. James McGinley, officer-in-charge of the ECRC detachment at Fort Jackson. "We have to ensure

they have to have all the right combat gear, and they have to make sure all their pay and entitlements are correct. We take care of a lot of personal and family issues for Sailors as they're training to deploy."

The demographic of the IA Sailor is just as diverse as the Navy itself, a reflection of the purple environment. Sailors of all ratings, from gunner's mates to yeomen, from India or Indiana or anywhere in between, are volunteering for what can be a unique experience, a professionally rewarding tour, and an opportunity to work with service members of all branches.

"We get [Sailors] from all disciplines," said McGinley. "We get submariners, aviators, surface [and] expeditionary warfare [Sailors] ... you name it, we get 'em. We get staff folks from the medical and legal sides, so the entire spectrum of the Navy is represented here."

Some Sailors are apprehensive about the role they will take upon receiving an IA assignment, but McGinley is quick to point out that Sailors going on IA assignments are not the "front line door-kickers."

"A lot of them are nervous about, 'What am I getting into? What kind of mission will I be doing over in theater?'" said McGinley. "The Sailors coming here are going to do combat support or combat service support over in theater. They're not Marines, and they're not Soldiers in the 82nd Airborne Division. They are Sailors who will serve in a combat support role."

The IA curriculum has evolved significantly since its inception, according to McGinley. As missions in support of overseas contingency operations have shifted, the training has changed to meet the newer threats and ensure Sailors continue to work cohesively with their land-based comrades in arms.



“We have a plan of instruction that is a very formal thing and a very big document that we train to,” explained McGinley. “But we don’t wait for that document to get modified for us to change the training.”

Facing an unpredictable and adaptable enemy, U.S. armed forces draw their strength from their diversity and ability to cooperatively interact with one another.

“If there is a new tactic, technique or procedure going on in theater right now that has life-saving relevance, we’ll go ahead and incorporate it into the training now so that we don’t have to wait for the bureaucracy to catch up with the paperwork,” he continues. “That really exhibits itself with the C-IED [counter-improvised explosive device] training that we provide here. Over the course of the last six months, the C-IED training we provide has increased in quality and quantity ... and we constantly tweak and modify that to keep it relevant.”

The Initial Shock

Every Sailor in the Navy, whether they came in through boot camp, officer candidate school, ROTC, or the U.S. Naval Academy, can recall the gear issue process and marching back to the barracks carrying a seabag which felt like it was loaded with anvils.

At McCrady Training Center, they get to experience that all over again. The process hasn’t changed, though the equipment has. Try on this web belt. Is that Kevlar helmet too small? Does the body armor fit properly?

Helmet? Body armor?

As Sailors receive these items, the enormity of the situation begins to weigh on them, like the body armor for which they were just fitted. This realization is cemented when Sailors are led to the armory, where they are issued the M16A2 rifles which, for at least the next six months, will be by their sides at all times. Sailors will learn how to properly operate, calibrate, and maintain their weapons, and it will be their responsibility



AC2(AW) David Allen Shoemaker, like many of his shipmates, experience their first meals-ready-to-eat (MREs) during their training at Fort Jackson, S.C.

Above from left—

IT2(SW) Barron Fludd and his shipmates conduct a first inventory of their issued field gear. Each Sailor leaves the training center with three seabags. According to Fludd, the chaos of having all the gear spread out and drill sergeants barking out instructions was reminiscent of boot camp.

Sailors wait in line for weapons issue. Once issued, the weapon becomes a constant companion for the duration of the recipient’s deployment.

The training center uses a crawl/walk/run method of training.

to keep them in top operational condition, from the butt stock right down to the bolt cam pin.

“Yes, Drill Sergeant!”

The drill sergeants’ mission at the training center seems simple: introduce Sailors to an Army mindset and way of life. Cultural differences between the two services, however, run quite deep; for example, the word “quartermaster” in the Army denotes someone who works in supply and logistics, whereas the same word in the Navy references someone who steers and navigates the ship.

“The Navy has conditioned their Sailors to think ‘Navy,’ and you kind of have to reverse some of that process to get them [to understand] the Army way of thinking,” said Army Staff Sgt. Michael Garcia, a drill sergeant from Niagara Falls, N.Y. “For some of the Sailors, they’ve had Marine training in the past, so you either have to undo or add on to what they bring to the table.”

Garcia is quick to point out one of the most significant differences the drill sergeants face when training the IAs. The Sailors who come through the gates of McCrady Training Center have been in the Navy for at least one enlistment, and a significant portion of Sailors are senior officers and enlisted personnel.

“You’re not dealing with a private,” said Garcia. “You’re dealing with seasoned Sailors, so you have to take that into account.”

Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Maurice Harris, an IA from Chicago, headed for Afghanistan, was surprised at his first encounter with the drill sergeants.

“They’re more understanding than I thought they would be,” said Harris. “They knew we weren’t used to Army life, [that] we had our own way of living [and] doing things in the Navy. They were patient, yet stern when they had to be.”

The Sailors in the midst of this training understand the drill sergeants’ motivation.

“You respect [the drill sergeant] because what he’s trying to do is keep the schedule,” said Information Systems Technician 1st Class (SW/AW) Drew Corbin, an IA from San Diego, headed for Afghanistan. “He’s been given a mission to get you ready

for combat. They don’t take it lightly. That’s their job, and you have to respect that.”

Arrrrrmy Training, Sir!

Gear issue is only the beginning; once the Sailors are issued their gear, the drill sergeants intensify the training. Sailors are out of bed at 5 a.m., but drill sergeants are usually up at 3 a.m. to arrive at McCrady Training Center early enough to prepare for the day’s exercises. Once the day’s schedule is finalized, they wake up the Sailors and get them in formation.

Though Sailors may be accustomed to utilities, khakis, and the NWU, the uniform of the day at Fort Jackson includes “the full battle-rattle” – their individual body armor, Kevlar helmets, load-bearing equipment, gloves, and their weapons. The full gear weighs at least 50 pounds.

“Usually, the night before, I like to get everything ready so I’m not forgetting anything,” said Corbin.

Classes are an integral part of IA training, and they come at the Sailors at a rapid pace. Classes include basic survival training, a condensed version of search, evasion, resistance, and escape training, including the Code of Conduct. Sailors also learn how to operate the PRC-117F communication system and the basics of Army radio communication, including how to do a nine-line brief – a method of reporting unexploded ordnance or calling for close air support or a medical evacuation. While Sailors may be familiar with shipboard chemical, biological and radiological training, the Army’s version can present new challenges. Basic and advanced first aid, an essential skill in the battle field, is also covered in length.

Training can last up to 14 hours, from 5 a.m. to 7 p.m. Physical training (PT) starts at 5:30 a.m., which, in Army time, means 10 minutes prior.

“[The drill sergeants] really mean ‘be early,’ said Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Nathan Jackson, an IA from Tucson, Ariz., headed for Commander, Joint Task Force – Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA). “If they tell you to be there at 6:15 a.m., you will literally be yelled at for being there at 6:14 a.m.”



After morning PT, Sailors don their full battle-rattle, for the day's training. Sailors will learn a multitude of essential skills tailored to their upcoming assignments, and if weapons familiarity and qualifications are on the schedule, it's going to be a particularly long day.

Weapons familiarity is an integral part of IA training. The M-16A2 rifle essentially becomes as vital to the Sailor's welfare as water or food. Under the watchful eyes of the drill sergeants, Sailors learn how to properly disassemble and reassemble their weapons, as well as how to thoroughly clean and lubricate each component to ensure the weapon remains operational.

Though Jackson anticipated the need to clean his M-16, he didn't realize the difficulty of the process due to the massive carbon buildup in the weapon after a day on the range.

"I hate weapon cleaning just as much as dentists hate people who don't floss," said Jackson.

Drill sergeants assist Sailors in "zeroing," or calibrating, each weapon for a particular Sailor so each round Sailors send downrange goes exactly where it's intended. Drill sergeants instruct Sailors on clearing barrel procedures and ensure they follow each step to the letter as weapons safety is pounded into everybody's mind, especially on the firing range where live ammunition is now a factor.

According to McGinley, the average IA Sailor in training will shoot nearly 1,000 rounds while at McCrady Training Center.

"The Navy made a great increase in investment in the amount of ammunition that the Sailors get to shoot, and that has made a very big difference," said McGinley. "Sailors not only qualify on a weapon, but they become very confident and competent with it. They will leave here with a comfort level that they [didn't have before]."

Despite the structured curriculum, the drill sergeants must remain flexible to accommodate changes in the training schedule, as well as any issues Sailors may need to address - anything from medical to administrative. An end-of-day briefing is held after training, regardless of when training ends for the day, so Sailors know what events are scheduled for the next day.

Below from left—

The hands-on training, such as basic first aid, use of field communication equipment as well as weapons familiarization will prepare them for service in a combat zone.

Active-duty and Reserve Sailors, ranging in rank from E-3 to O-6, undergo a complete physical fitness assessment designed to prepare Sailors for their upcoming global war on terrorism support assignments and individual augmentee deployments.

Army Sergeant 1st Class Matthew Blanchett, a drill sergeant assigned to the training staff, observes and corrects Sailors who are learning weapons clearing procedures. The drill sergeant's role is as much about teaching the right mind set as it is teaching correct procedures.

Sailors learn the proper way to disassemble and clean an M-16 rifle. Many of the Sailors say this is the most frustrating part of the training, yet it is very important in boosting their confidence.





Sailors finally have some down time ... until the next day, when it starts all over again.

In the Field

Sailors at McCrady Training Center eagerly anticipate the opportunity to put what they learn in the classroom into practice.

"Remember everything we went over in class the other day," Garcia said right before he launches into a detailed description of the exercise at hand. "[When you] stop the vehicle, who opens up all the doors?"

"They do!" the Sailors shout in unison, referring to those in the vehicle.

Garcia is about to give the Sailors a practical education in managing and operating an entry control point (ECP), a scenario designed around material they learned the previous day.

The brief continues as Garcia calls on Sailors to form teams to search the interior and the exterior of the vehicle, and to man the designated individual search pit. He also explains how to use the explosive indicator kit, and shows Sailors the "lollipop" stop signs and the spike strips at the ECP.

"Whoever's in charge, make a decision," said Garcia. "You have an interpreter here to use - make sure you use [him]. Like I said before, you are never a stand-alone force. Make sure you use everything you have."

As the exercise progresses, Garcia provides tactical training points for Sailors manning the search pit.

"When you're down here, you grab and squeeze, all the way down," Garcia explains to a Sailor as he demonstrates how to search someone. "Put him at a disad-

vantage, positive control - they know the deal. If you find something, don't keep pushing - you know something's in that pocket, okay?"

Even with the importance of the training and the serious nature of the situations the Sailors face in theater, the drill sergeants know when to lighten up a bit.

"I try to throw a little bit of humor in there," said Garcia. "It keeps things going - other than that, [the subject matter's] pretty dry for them. Once they start laughing, it gets the juices flowing."

Once Sailors complete the ECP practicum, they get ready for another essential training evolution designed to familiarize them with what has become a standard method of moving personnel and supplies. They pile into the five Humvees in the convoy - four Sailors plus one drill sergeant per vehicle - and the exercise begins.

On the route this particular convoy is taking, each right turn serves as a checkpoint. Each Humvee contacts the base when they pass each checkpoint, and the last vehicle in the convoy confirms that all vehicles in the convoy have passed the checkpoint in question.

During the "clear the area" scenario, Sailors practice the standard tactics to secure convoys when suspected IEDs are found.

Upon locating a potential IED, Sailors know from training not to use the radios to call them in until they are safe within the Humvees, because such devices are often triggered by radio signals. Once an IED is spotted, the course of action is to retreat to the Humvee and call it in on a more secure channel.

During each exercise, Staff Sgt. David Garland, a drill sergeant from Troutman,

N.C., points out what to look for when doing an IED check.

"You're looking for the obvious - things that look out of place," said Garland.

"Let's give a good example - the road that we traveled on? You see all the crater holes in it? What happens if you saw a patch with nice, fresh pavement on it?" Garland asks. "Let's say there's gravel in it, or fresh sand in it, or fresh dirt. Those are things that you're looking for - if it looks out of the ordinary."

Sailors don't rely solely on convoys to transport them from Point A to Point B; land navigation teaches them to actually find Point A and Point B.

With a map, a plotting tool, a magnetic compass and grid coordinates in hand, Sailors march the pace-setting course - a system of stepping which determines how many strides equal a full kilometer, and then set off on the arduous trek.

Sailors can easily travel 20 or more kilometers by foot during a land navigation exercise across various types of terrain. When using the compass to shoot an azimuth, precision is paramount - 1 degree off and an IA could either find the wrong point or end up wandering aimlessly in the brush. If the latter is the case, the Sailor must shoot a "panic azimuth" - 180 degrees in the opposite direction - to regain his or her bearings.

In addition, each Sailor must not only track the number of kilometers traveled from the previous point to the next, but also remember how many paces equals a full kilometer. If the physical exhaustion of constant movement coupled with the mental exhaustion of tracking the traveled distance wasn't enough to deal with,



there is a strictly limited period of time to find all of the points he or she has plotted.

The Moment of Truth

The purple sky progresses to red, then orange and finally the sun ascends over the horizon. As these Sailors begin the last day of training, this will be the last stateside sunrise they will see for at least the next six months.

As the sun disappears over the horizon 14 hours later, anticipation and anxiety settle like a fog on the training center as the IAs drag their gear out to the grinder for the last time. They fall into the formations they have come to know for the last three weeks, as their drill sergeants muster them and give them the number of the bus they will be riding – one of the three white government buses parked across from the company offices.

The IAs have their weapons, body armor, gloves and helmets. Their seabags have been shuttled ahead to Columbia Metropolitan Airport, where they will be loaded onto the plane that will take them

to Kuwait for follow-on training before they arrive at their ultimate destination.

The air is abuzz with uncertainty, but also excitement and a measure of confidence.

“The most important thing [is that] I’m confident in my skills,” said Corbin. “If I have to use a weapon, I can use it. If I was on a convoy, I would feel confident [that I would] be ready.”

As the buses pull out, the drill sergeants render a sharp salute to the departing Sailors, a sign of respect for the men and women they trained and molded for the past three weeks and the mission that awaits them.

“The overall satisfaction when I get e-mails from Sailors from downrange, [about how] the training we’ve given them has helped them along there ... that’s rewarding,” said Garcia. “To know that they got there, accomplished their mission and got back home to their family ... I sleep well every night.” 🇺🇸

Vlahos is assigned to Defense Media Activity – Anacostia, Washington, D.C.

Above from left—

Lt. Cmdr. Raul Barrientos listens intently as Army Staff Sgt. David Garland, a drill sergeant, explains what went well and what didn’t during previous convoy training evolution.

While on a routine mission, Sailors respond to a report of an improvised explosive attack in this simulated Iraqi village.

Convoy procedures are a vital part of the three-weeks of training active-duty and Reserve Sailors, undergo at the McCrady Training Center, Fort Jackson, S.C.

HM1 Anthony Wivell provides emergency medical assistance to his shipmates who were wounded while responding to a simulated improvised explosive attack.

Below from left—

The training is designed to outfit, equip and prepare more than 100 active-duty and Reserve Sailors for their upcoming deployments.

Sailors leave for their upcoming deployments.





A photograph of a person in a black karate gi practicing a technique on a blue mat. The person is in a low, powerful stance, with one leg extended forward and the other back, both feet flat on the mat. Their hands are positioned near their feet, suggesting a leg sweep or a similar ground-based technique. The background is slightly blurred, showing what appears to be a gymnasium setting with a wooden floor and some equipment.

EEMP

Exceptional Family Member Program

Story by MC1 Bruce Cummins

Photos by MC1(AW) Brien Aho and MC1 Bruce Cummins

For the past several years, Joseph “BJ” Camano has been an active child, much like any other 10-year-old, participating in numerous activities while maintaining grades which would make any parent proud. He takes both piano and karate lessons, sings in the church choir and volunteers at the Judeo-Christian Outreach Program’s soup kitchen. All of this, of course, is punctuated by video game sessions, sleepovers with friends, the occasional argument with his 14-year-old sister and the typical fears of going to junior high school.

Ten-year-old Joseph “BJ” Camano practices striking techniques and observes other students during his karate class.



BJ enjoys a juice break with another young patient, Logan Flaathen after a therapy session.

Therapy patient 9-year-old Logan Flaathen and BJ (right) work together to make the swing work during a therapy session.

BJ seems like a typical boy transitioning into a young man.

But with all that is ordinary about BJ, there have been extraordinary moments of trial - stares from individuals, questions from strangers and surgeries too numerous to count - all attributable to what medical professionals call congenital disarticulation of the hip, left thigh proximal femoral focal deficiency and a right upper extremity forearm and hand malformation.

In layman's terms, BJ was born with no legs and a severely malformed right arm.

Two decades ago, having a family member diagnosed with a condition such as Camano's might have impaired the active-duty career of his father, Lt. Cmdr. Santiago Camano, severely restricting the areas in which the Camano family might have been stationed and possibly affecting his chances for promotion. But with the advent of a program designed to ensure optimum use of permanent change of station (PCS) funding by considering the Navy's man-

ning requirements, the service member's career and the special needs of family members, individuals whose family members have disabilities can remain competitive for advancement while knowing their family is receiving the best of care.

EFMP is a multidisciplinary assignment initiative interfacing military and civilian agencies to provide comprehensive and coordinated medical, educational, community and personnel support to military families with special needs, according to Cmdr. Cynthia Chargois Granby, EFMP (PERS-451X) branch head.

More than 16,000 U.S. Navy family members are enrolled in the program, a venture integral to maintaining continuity of care for special needs family members and alleviating service members' concerns about their family and their career.

The EFMP initially targeted infants and toddlers with disabilities and centered around assignment coordination, but according to Granby, the program today is taking a more holistic approach by providing family support, incorporating all aspects of the healthcare system, the patient's needs and the service member's career.

"Enrollment ensures family members with special medical, educational or mental health needs are identified so that our military members are assigned to duty stations where their family members' special needs can be met," said Granby. "It takes care of our Sailors and their families. It ensures that members are being placed in locations where the service member can fulfill their full tour, alleviating gaps in tours or early returns from overseas locations."

While the EFMP remains fluid and adaptable, current criteria for enrollment in the program includes disabilities exhibiting chronic medical or physical conditions, conditions requiring adaptive equipment or assistive technology devices and some intense special educational needs. Other considerations include mental health disorders, chronic respiratory conditions and the diagnosis of cancer or insulin dependent diabetes.

Initiated in September 1987 by the U.S. Army and subsequently adopted by all branches of the U.S. military, the EFMP was originally an effort to ensure military organizations were in compliance with public law that mandated eligible pre-school and school-age children with disabilities be provided a free and appropriate education overseas within DoD areas of responsibility. Today each military component has developed its own guidelines, addressing special needs identification, enrollment and assignment management, each of which are governed by DoD Instruction 1315.19.

Camano, a prior-enlisted hospital corpsman and 23-year Navy veteran, said enrollment in the EFMP has had a positive impact on both him and his family, providing direction to available resources and guidance on the numerous issues he and his family face.

"The EFMP is an excellent tool which has helped me both personally and professionally," said Camano. "Through this program we were able to provide [my son] much needed medical attention, the quality of life he deserves and the best educational support; staff members at facilities became our support network as we navigated the medical, educational and other issues along the way."

Lt. Cmdr. Santiago Camano assists his 10-year-old son, BJ, to his walker during a routine therapy visit at a pediatric therapy facility.

Occupational Therapist Judy Anderson exercises muscles in BJ's lower back during a routine physical therapy session.

BJ performs stretching exercises before a physical therapy session.





“Before the birth of my son, I had heard of EFMP, but only as something next to somebody’s name.”

— MA2 Emily Buster

MA2 Emily Buster watches her husband, Christopher Adams hold their son Joey during a routine in-home therapy session.

Three-year-old Joey Adams identifies items from flash cards during an in-home therapy session.

Three-year-old Joey Adams reaches for a fork after correctly identifying the utensil to Board Certified Behavior Analyst Therapist Kenna Nelson during his in-house therapy session.

According to Granby, the program is a simple process. Authorized Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System family members with a unique medical or educational need are identified during a routine healthcare visit to a medical treatment facility (MTF) or TRICARE health provider, through self-identification from the service member or family member or during an assignment suitability screening by an EFMP coordinator. Family members identified with medical, mental health or special education requirements of a chronic nature (six months or longer) are promptly enrolled when the condition is identified.

While enrollment in the program is mandatory, according to Master-at-Arms 2nd Class Emily Buster, whose three-year-old son Joey is enrolled in the program, the process was made seamless through medical professionals working with her.

“I discovered this through my child’s pediatrician,” said Buster. “She had us fill out forms and sign and verify his condition and indicate the type of treatment he requires. Then they submit the form to the EFMP to be reviewed and accepted – it is a fairly simple process. Before the birth of my son, I had heard of EFMP, but only as something next to somebody’s name.”



Like many service members throughout the U.S. Armed Forces, Buster was unfamiliar with the EFMP, but when her then-one-year-old son was diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder and macrocephaly (an abnormally large head) in October 2008, she recognized he would require intensive therapy, something enrollment in the EFMP enabled her to pursue.

Buster's son, diagnosed with moderate to severe autism, has limited verbal skills and significant problems in communicating. Unable to express his thoughts and feelings about his wants and needs, Joey also has sensory issues with loud noises and certain textures of food. Joey appears to exist in a world of his own, not interacting with other children.

According to Granby, once an issue such as the diagnosis of Buster's son has been identified, the service member and family member are then referred to their MTF EFMP coordinator, an individual who assists with completing the programs required forms and paperwork.

Once the forms are completed, the MTF EFMP coordinator forwards the completed enrollment form to a regional central screening committee (CSC), at Naval Medical Center (NMC) Portsmouth, NMC San Diego or U.S. Naval Hospital Yokosuka, Japan. Here, the CSC reviews the submitted paperwork and recommends a category code for the family member.

The paperwork is then forwarded to Granby who confirms the category code and enters the information into a data base, something U.S. Navy detailers access to pinpoint assignments to locations with appropriate resources to address the family member's special needs. She also said that service members should contact their local coordinators or command point of contacts for specific questions regarding EFMP. They can assist them with their needs and clarify any issues.

Buster initially feared her son's disability would adversely impact her Navy career, but after researching the EFMP, she understands how her career will closely parallel that of her peers with only one difference – Buster is limited to duty stations near major U.S. military installations.





Christopher Adams helps his son stand on his head after a therapy session.

“I want my son to reach his full potential, and I will do anything necessary to make sure that happens.”

— MA2 Emily Buster

“I’m not considered worldwide assignable, and for [master-at-arms] we spend a lot of our careers at overseas locations as there are not many on ships,” said Buster, adding that she fulfills sea duty requirements on Norfolk-based Navy ships or mobile security squadrons in the continental United States. “But after learning more about the program, I know that I can be just as competitive as anyone. I am still able to do all types of duties and stay in the same area so I can have my son in the place he needs to be to have the best treatment.”

According to Granby, service members with family members enrolled in the EFMP have always received equal consideration for accompanied assignments and for promotions, and family members – like Camano’s and Buster’s – are placed into one of six categories based on the type and frequency of medical or educational intervention the family member requires, something an assignments detailer uses as guidance for future orders:

- Category I: Needs do not generally limit assignments. Enrollment is designed for monitoring purposes for medical or educational needs.
- Category II: Limited overseas/remote CONUS assignments. Care is usually available at most locations, except for some isolated CONUS/overseas areas. If orders are for overseas duty, the family must successfully complete overseas screening.
- Category III: Limited to/no overseas assignments. The medical or educational condition precludes assignment to overseas locations based on non-availability of medical and/or educational services at most overseas locations. If orders are for overseas duty, the family must successfully complete overseas screening.
- Category IV: This medical or educational condition requires assignment to billets near major medical treatment facilities within CONUS only.
- Category V: This category includes a provision for homesteading in an area where the service member can fulfill both sea and shore duty requirements, typically in the geographic areas of Norfolk; Jacksonville, Fla.; San Diego; Bremerton, Wash.; and Washington, D.C. Eligible families are those having a family member with multiple/severe disabilities or medical problems, or highly complex educational requirements.

- Category VI: (Temporary category) The medical or educational condition requires a stable environment for six months to a year due to ongoing treatment of diagnostic assessments and must be updated in one year to receive permanent category or to be dis-enrolled.

Both Camano and Buster’s children are in Category V, which includes a provision for homesteading in an area where the service member can fulfill both sea- and shore-duty requirements.

But another aspect of the program, according to Camano, particularly for service members with family members with more severe disabilities, is the opportunity the program affords for family members to form bonds with medical professionals and other service members in similar situations.

“Having BJ enrolled in the program has allowed us opportunities to build personal relationships with the medical team working closely with him, both in caring for his health as well as education,” said Camano. “It gives the stability that he needs.”

Buster said that much like Camano’s child, her son benefits from the routine therapy sessions he receives, and the guidance she received on the program has served to reinforce her expectations for the remainder of her military career.

According to Buster, the opportunity the Navy has given her to provide her son top-notch care is overwhelming.

“When my son was first diagnosed, my chief at the time was also enrolled in the program so he was able to tell me how it had impacted him and his family,” she said. “And with him also being a [master-at-arms] it gave me hope that I could still have a successful career and take care of my child.

“I want my son to reach his full potential, and I will do anything necessary to make sure that happens,” said Buster. “I don’t know how I would have been able to afford all the testing, treatment and therapy he requires. The Navy has provided all that to me and made sure that my son has the best care possible.” 🇺🇸

Cummins is assigned to Defense Media Activity-Anacostia, Washington, D.C.

AIM D- Atsugi


OPERATIONAL DIVERSITY

Story by MC2(AW) Jonathan W. Hutto Sr.
Photos by MC2 Steven Khor





There are thousands of components comprising the SH-60 *Sea Hawk* helicopter, all equally integral in maintaining the aircraft's integrity and mission capability.



Cmdr. Sean Mersch, AIMD Atsugi commanding officer credits the diversity of his crew for the success of his command.



But no matter where each piece of this aircraft is forged – from the fuselage to the bolts holding the seats in place – each portion of the helicopter cohesively flows into the next, enabling the aircraft to fulfill its duties.

As varied as the nuts and bolts on the aircraft they work on and as different as the missions their helicopter performs, a diverse group of U.S. Navy Sailors, from countries spanning the globe, are all integral pieces of Commander, Fleet Air Western Pacific, Aircraft Intermediate Maintenance Detachment (AIMD) Atsugi, Japan, jointly functioning to keep U.S. Navy aviation elements operating.

Whether from South America, Europe or Asia, these Sailors call Japan home, and Cmdr. Sean Mersch, AIMD Atsugi's commanding officer, proudly credits the diversity of his crew for the successes of the command.

"The minority is bigger at AIMD Atsugi than the so-called majority," said Mersch. "We have Sailors here from more than 22 countries. The Sailors were actually born in those countries and not descendants. These Sailors come with different backgrounds educationally, socially

and in all aspects. Diversity and equal opportunity for all is very important. The Navy has been in the forefront of opportunity.”

Mersh himself is an immigrant. Born in Luxemburg, a small country between France, Germany and Belgium, he had aspirations of serving as part of a large, industrial navy. The German Navy presented the closest viable option, but as Mersh’s father was a holocaust survivor, Mersh would eventually look to join the ranks of

the former- Allied nations.

Prior to joining the service, Mersh graduated from college as an advertising specialist, worked as a photographer in Luxemburg and specialized in industrial photography. In 1979, he relocated to the United States and enlisted in the U.S. Navy in 1981 at the age of 31.

Much like their senior leadership, AIMD Atsugi Sailors represent the diversity the U.S. Armed Forces has come to embody.

As a newly-arrived immigrant from a small coffee town in Colombia, 16-year-old Manuel Escobar was impressed by the life and achievements of his stepfather, Aviation Boatswain’s Mate 1st Class Jorge Escobar.

“Upon meeting my stepfather, I realized he had seen many places and had integrated customs from other countries within his life,” said Aviation Structural Mechanic 2nd Class Escobar. “After witnessing how my stepfather lived, I immediately embraced everything the Navy had to offer.”

Learning to read and write English while living outside of a predominant Latino culture proved challenging for Escobar, but he didn’t let his differences dissuade him from enlisting in the U.S. Navy in October 2003.

“My first duty station was in Corpus Christi, Texas,” said Escobar. “There was a strong Colombian community in Miami where I lived, but not in Corpus Christi. This, along with learning English, made my first enlistment somewhat challenging. I did gain much knowledge from being exposed to many ethnicities.”

“The Navy has been in the forefront of opportunity” - Cmdr. Sean Mersh

Escobar’s military service also helped him gain his U.S. citizenship. “A civilian friend and I started our naturalization process at the same time,” said Escobar. “I became a citizen three years faster than he did.”





Today, Escobar works with fiberglass and composite materials to fix parts from both planes and helicopters. While every job in the Navy has proven to be challenging for him, Escobar's experience in Atsugi has been extremely rewarding.

"I have felt like a part of a family here since I landed at the airport," said Escobar. "The person who picked me up became like an older brother to me, sticking by my side through my transition. As soon as I got to AIMD, I had this feeling of everyone looking out for one another."

Escobar was one of 220 Sailors from AIMD Atsugi to take a Command Managed Equal Opportunity (CMEQ) survey yielding untraditional results for a naval command. Out of 220 people who took the survey, 170 identified themselves as minorities. Escobar believes the CMEQ survey is an indicator of the present and future trends in the make up of the nation.

"When you think about it, everyone in the United States has come from different places," said Escobar. "Little by little, everyone is going to be one minority with no distinction between majority and minority."

Furthering an ideal and directly involving himself in a culture more than half-a-world away from what he had previously experienced, one AIMD Atsugi Sailor has discovered a universal language. Aviation Support Equipment Technician 2nd Class Lamont Russell Sewell, an avid basketball player and

native of Philadelphia, plays on two local basketball teams in Atsugi.

"Playing on the local basketball teams has helped expose me to the culture outside of my work environment," said Sewell. "I've been able to visit Southern and Northern Japan by simply playing basketball and having fun with the Japanese players. Basketball is global! You can't be scared to immerse yourself within the culture out in town."

At Atsugi AIMD, Sailors learn from each others' backgrounds and widen their horizons by immersing themselves in the Japanese culture. Sewell recently accomplished the difficult task of climbing Mount Fuji, the highest mountain in Japan.


"Climbing Mount Fuji has been the most challenging endeavor of my life," said Sewell. "The duration of the climb is both mental and physical. It's a challenge that helps one re-think life. Can you conquer a challenge that big and make it all the way through? For me, it was a metaphor for life as a whole."

Sewell and his shipmate, Aviation Structural Mechanic 2nd Class Winston Providence, a native of St. Vincent and the Grenadines in the Caribbean, work within the component repair group. Both of their jobs encompass troubleshooting equipment such as electrical generators and air-conditioning units. In contrast to Sewell's passion for basketball, food became the outlet through which Providence connected him to Japanese culture.

"The food in Japan is very similar to the food back home in St. Vincent," said Providence.

After graduating high school in St. Vincent, Providence moved to the United States in 1999 seeking opportunity.

AM2 Manuel Escobar (previous page), AS2 Lamont Russell Sewell, AM2 Winston Providence and AO2 Hoang Chau Nguyen are among the 170 sailors assigned to AIMD Atsugi who identified themselves as minority in a recent survey of the 220-member unit.



"There were more options and opportunity in the United States than back in St. Vincent," said Providence. "I had family members already in the States so I decided to make the move."

Providence saw a Navy commercial and was motivated by the opportunity to travel, to obtain a skill with benefits along with serving his new country. Once in the U.S. Navy, he was able to expedite his naturalization process and become a citizen in less than a year. Providence has served in Japan since 2003 at three commands, including Commander, Fleet Activities Sasebo, USS *Essex* (LHD 2) and AIMD Atsugi.

north and south. His family settled in Biloxi, Miss. His father worked in the shrimping industry, while his mother did full time house work.

Nguyen attended public schools in Biloxi where a small Vietnamese community exist. From early childhood, he always felt pressure to impress his father. This pressure served as a future motivation to join the U.S. Navy.

"Growing up I always wanted to stand out from my brothers and for my dad to recognize me," said Nguyen. "My older brother was very helpful to my dad and always reliable. At times, my

naval air forces operating in the Western Pacific, Indian Ocean and Arabian Gulf. A primary aspect of the mission is supporting HSM-51 by providing maintenance for SH-60 *Sea Hawk* helicopters throughout the 5th and 7th Fleet Areas of Responsibility. On average, AIMD Atsugi supports 63 helicopters per day.

"We are forced to proactively plan for all emergencies because things break, things happen and you have to plan for it," said Mersh.

Ultimately, what diversity means for Mersh, his Sailors and the Navy at large is the ability to get the mission done. As the Chief of Naval Personnel Vice Adm.

"... everyone in the United States has come from different places, ..." - AM2 Manuel Escobar

"I like it over here in Japan," said Providence. "The country is peaceful, the people are friendly and the culture is great. If you get out and take the tours, you will see there is a lot to experience."

Aviation Ordnanceman 2nd Class Hoang Chau Nguyen has experienced quite a bit in Japan after his four-year tour aboard USS *Theodore Roosevelt* (CVN 71).

"I came here in the fall of 2007, and my time has been simply amazing," said Nguyen. "I've had the opportunity to do plenty of fishing along with visiting the big Buddha in Kamakura."

Nguyen's parents were born and reared in Vietnam. They migrated to the United States in the 1960s to escape the Vietnam civil war between the

father would call me by my brother's name. I wanted to get out of the shadow so I joined the Navy to be my own man. My father was proud and purchased me a car after I had enlisted."

Nguyen is very thankful for the opportunities the military has given him, including the primary opportunity to get an education.

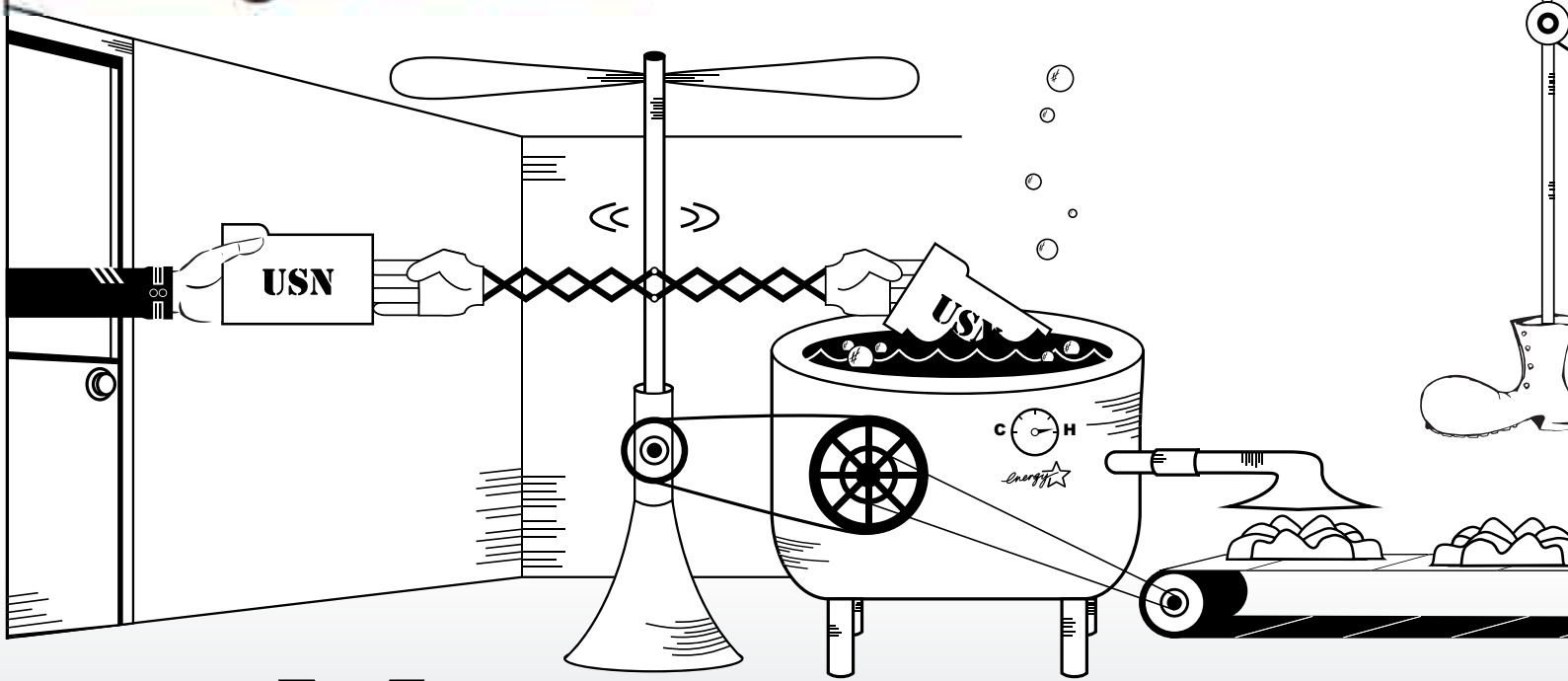
"I'm currently completing my bachelor's degree in business. I would like to use my new knowledge to open a sushi restaurant in the future."

Cultural, regional and language expertise are some of the key contributions that these Sailors make to the Navy as it engages around the globe. AIMD Atsugi's primary mission is to provide intermediate level support for

Mark Ferguson puts it, the Navy is in a competition for the very best talent.

"There is a generational shift taking place in the nation; 70 percent of new workers entering the work force are women and minorities. That's a market that we have to tap into to make a stronger Navy," said Ferguson. "We are finding that industry is competing with us for that talent base because they recognize as well the value of diversity in their workforce."

Hutto is assigned to Defense Media Activity-Anacostia, Washington, D.C.



Your Digital You

Story by MC1(SW) Bruce Cummins

As U.S. governmental and private sector business practices move toward an alignment along a more 'green' path, one of the mainstays Sailors have always hand-carried to various duty stations –sometimes around the world – is on its way to greener pastures.

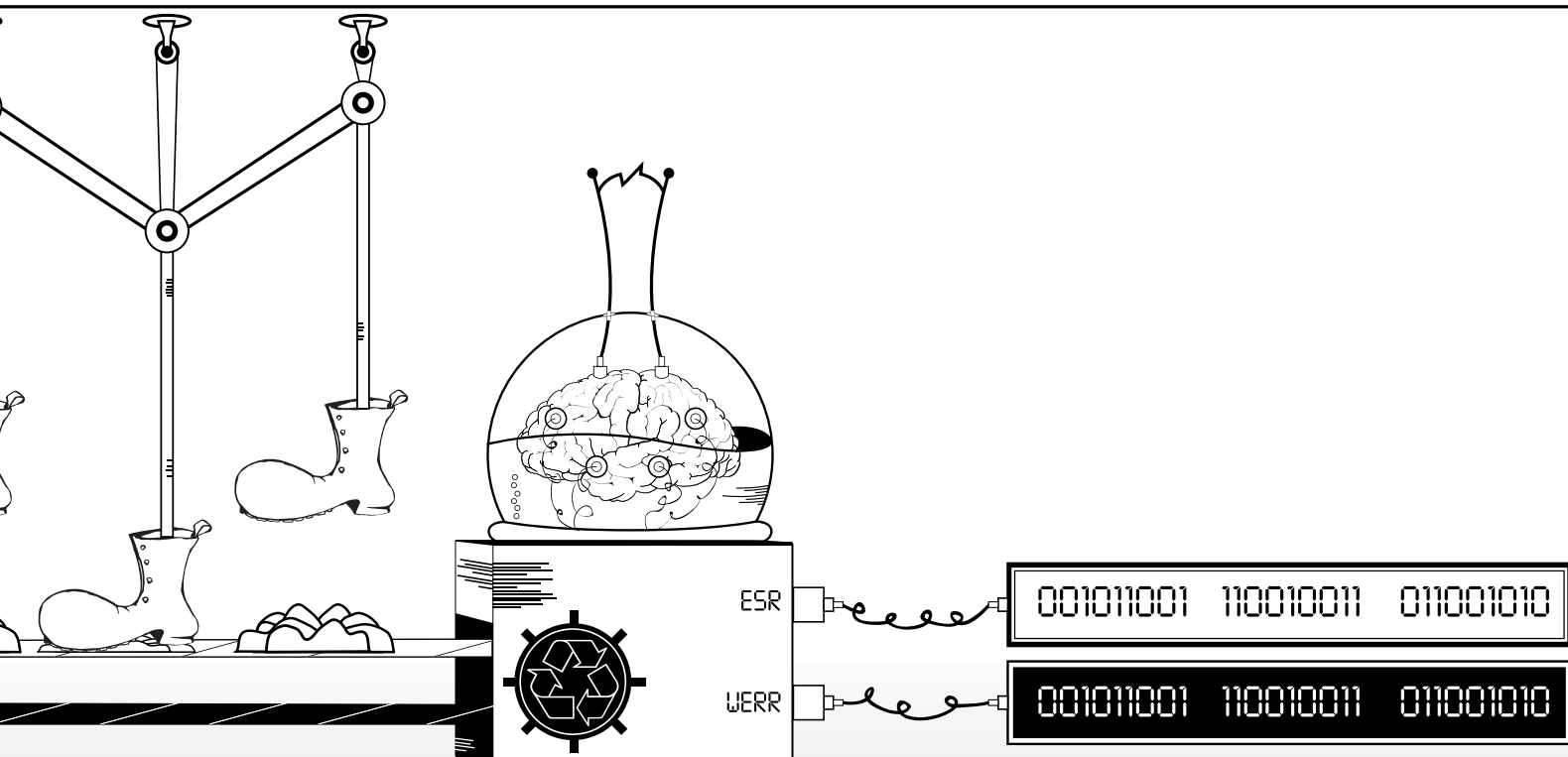
The chronicle of both a Sailor's and officer's military life, an official record jam-packed with periodic evaluations and fitness reports, letters of commendation and letters of reprimand and Page 2s and Page 13s, is, to put it mildly, a thing of the past.

The Enlisted Service Record (ESR) and the Officer Service Record (OSR) are, with the advent of technology, the steady climb toward more environmentally conscious efforts and a serious service-wide initiative to streamline decades of personnel documentation, effectively gone.

Or it will be ... and quite soon.

Almost every Sailor has heard the lecture – often expletive-laden and replete with 'constructive' criticism – from that senior chief, 'explaining,' that 'one's record is one's own responsibility,' that a Sailor need maintain accountability for their own career. With that lecture in mind, generations of Sailors have scurried to copy machines immediately after an Awards-at-Quarters ceremony, fiercely intent on ensuring their awards or recognitions were promptly entered, and maintaining a copy for their own personal records - something which Sailors should still do.

But now, with the U.S. Navy phasing out enlisted field service records, all enlisted Sailors and officers will access their records online, a move in a direction which will streamline the record-keeping and data-entry process, provide 'real-time' access to information at a moment's notice and provide Sailors the opportunity to manage their records, something Chief Personnel Specialist (AW) Catherine Diaz, Navy Operational Support Center Fort Worth, Texas, customer sup-



port leading chief petty officer said is important in maintaining the continuity of a Sailor's career.

"Sailors should do a periodic validation of their records. Missing 'evals,' training documentation, etc., can cause a lot of problems—such as missing a promotion," she said. "This doesn't have to happen."

And it won't ... or at least it shouldn't.

Sailors are now afforded the luxury of two mechanisms through which to track their documentation—the ESR and Web-Enabled Record Review (WERR), two separate interfaces with differing functions, but both mechanisms through which a Sailor can see their military life on paper.

The ESR is an online version of the service record and is replacing the paper service record, something used for generations by Sailors, but with one key aspect: it is simply an electronic version of the service record, not a permanent account such as the records archived at the National Personnel Records Center's Military Personnel Records facility in a service member's Official Military Personnel File.

But the ESR is a necessary venture, one each Sailor need explore, and doing so is as simple as logging on with a Common Access Card to one of the probably million computers used at U.S. Navy installations around the world. Doing this will provide Sailors with access to the Navy Standard Integrated Personnel System (NSIPS) website <https://nsips.nmci.navy.mil>, where a Sailor can follow some fairly self-explanatory links to gain access the virtual gold mine of information available.

New users can register an account here, and after doing so are able to review the personal information, professional history, training, education and qualifications, performance evaluations or fitness reports and other administrative remarks their record currently contains.

And—since exercising the privilege almost every Sailor thinks about, plans for and simply can't wait to take—after obtaining a Leave Control Number (LCN) from their command, Sailors can monitor a leave request.

Key word: monitor.

That's not to say that a Sailor can just access their ESR, check a few boxes and find themselves on 30 days of leave—rather this is a method which should serve to further the streamlining process of administrative functions throughout the organization they've chosen to serve. Sailors can see the status of a leave request, request an extension and even check-in and check-out at some commands—after getting that all-too-important LCN.

Navy commands are now using NSIPS/ESR as the single data entry point for all Sailors, the single focal point used to enter personnel transactions—including those affecting that 1st and 15th of the month mainstay, pay.

All of the abovementioned, and in no particular order (with pay more than likely a primary consideration for many), represent reasons Sailors need familiarize themselves with the ESR inner workings. But with all the control over a Sailor's official chronology of important events the ESR will offer, those with an account need remember the ESR is used to track a service member's status while serving; viewing a permanent record is different.

Accessing the WERR on the Bureau of Naval Personnel Online website at www.bol.navy.mil will display individual scanned service record pages, including performance evaluations. This, not the ESR, is what selection boards review when considering candidates for advancement and special programs, and is a permanent record of a Sailor's career.

While each of these tools, both the ESR and WERR, are critical in maintaining a career, the awful, unquestionable finality of it all is simple, as easy as hearing that lecture from the Senior Chief.

Putting it into practice, however, is entirely up to the Sailor.

To learn more about the differences between ESR and WERR and other tools used to validate personnel records, see the Sailor Career Toolbox posted on the Navy Personnel Command website at www.npc.navy.mil/CareerInfo/StayNavyTools/CareerTools/ <http://www.npc.navy.mil/CareerInfo/StayNavyTools/CareerTools/>.

Cummins is assigned to Defense Media Activity-Anacostia, Washington, D.C.

A photograph of two identical female twins in Navy uniforms sitting at a desk. They are both laughing heartily. The desk is covered with a large map of the United States. In the background, there is a framed certificate on the wall and a small bell hanging from the ceiling.

Identical twins

**join Navy, train at
CID Corry Station**

Story and photo by Gary Nichols

Growing up identical twins, Ashley and Elyssa Valentine shared a room and were dressed in matching clothing. Once again, they find themselves sharing a room and wearing matching clothes, this time as Cryptologic Technician (Technical) “A” school students at the Center for Information Dominance (CID) Corry Station, Pensacola, Fla.

“People had double-takes all the time when they saw us,” Elyssa said. “Wait a minute, didn’t I just see you?” people would always say.”

The twins graduated high school in 2007 with Elyssa attending college and Ashley joining the workforce. It seemed as if the twins had finally broken the mold, going their separate ways and making their own mark in the world. But the bond between these twin sisters is unusually strong.

After a year at a local community college, Elyssa had her fill of studying business management, and decided to follow in her parents’ footsteps by enlisting in the Navy.

“Elyssa had wanted to join the Navy since she was 18,” Ashley said. “So after a year of college she signed up with the Navy.”

“I kind of knew I’d always end up in the Navy,” Elyssa said. “I went to college and was kind of bored; it just wasn’t my cup of tea.”

During the year Ashley had been working as a freelance graphic designer. Less than two weeks after Elyssa had joined the Navy, Ashley walked into the local recruiter’s office and also enlisted in the Navy.

From the moment they reported for testing and evaluation at the Military Entrance Processing Station (MEPS) in nearby San Diego, Ashley and Elyssa turned heads and caught people off guard.

The twins left for recruit training at Recruit Training Command Great Lakes, Ill., at the same time and ended up in the same company.

Sharing the same last name, the pair ended up as bunkmates for the first half of their two months at Great Lakes. Being together seemed

to offer the twins some comfort as they learned to deal with the rigors and new challenges that boot camp presented.

“It was easier emotionally,” Elyssa said. “I needed someone to confide in. I could talk to her after [lights out]. She always had my back.”

The twins eventually earned the nicknames “Thing One” and “Thing Two,” due mostly to the fact that no one, including fellow recruits and company commanders, ever seemed to be able to figure out who was who.

“None of them [in boot camp] could tell us apart,” Ashley said. “When Elyssa got in trouble, I got punished with IT [Intensive Training].”

“We got in trouble all the time for giggling in boot camp,” Elyssa said. “Everything was funny. It made us giggle.”

Eventually their company commander split up their cozy arrangement after learning the pair had been talking late into the night.

“Halfway through [boot camp] they separated us,” Elyssa said. “That was hard.”

“We were at battle stations during our 20th birthday,” Ashley said. “That was kind of cool.”

The twins reported for CTT “A” school at CID Corry Station where they shared the same room in the barracks and could talk as much as they wanted.

Still, the near constant “togetherness” is wearing a little thin, especially for the twins who have been so much a part of each other’s lives for all of their 20 years.

Elyssa said she hoped to get stationed on the West Coast while Ashley wanted to be stationed in Japan.

“I would like to try and go back to San Diego,” Elyssa said. “I miss it there and I could go home on the weekends.”

But, recent circumstances made Ashley reconsider her original choice of a Far East duty station when she married high school sweetheart-turned-fellow Sailor Seaman Justin Day in a small private wedding ceremony at the chapel aboard Corry Station. The couple hope to have a formal wedding back home.

“I had wanted to go to Japan, but that was before I was married,” Ashley explained. “But now I’m hoping to go to San Diego because my husband is being assigned there.”

Ashley has been a Sailor long enough to realize that the needs of the Navy must come first, even regarding matters of the heart. The ship’s schedule will dictate – at least to some degree – when and maybe where her dream wedding will finally take place.

The twins have discovered they still receive double-takes when they are together, but now that Ashley is sporting a new name strip – CTTSN Ashley Day – at long last people will finally be able to tell them apart. 🍀

Nichols is assigned to CID Corry Station, Pensacola, Fla.

Child and Youth Program Expanding by 7,000 Child Care Spaces

The Navy is expanding its Child and Youth Program by more than 7,000 child care spaces fleet-wide for children ages 12 and under.

The expansion will reduce a child's time spent on waiting lists to three months or less to meet 80 percent of the potential need across the Navy by the end of 2011.

"Reaching the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) goal of providing access for 80 percent of the potential need has been elusive," said John Baker, Commander, Navy Installation Command's director of Fleet and Family Readiness, during recent testimony to members of the House Armed Services Committee. "With strong financial support from the president, congress, OSD and Navy, we have been able to launch an aggressive expansion plan that will allow us to meet our space requirements."

Commander, Navy Installations Command's Child and Youth Program is achieving the expansion through a variety of measures

to include the construction of 31 new child development centers. Classrooms are being converted to accommodate children under the age of three, the age group in highest demand. Also, the Navy has also partnered with the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRRA) to subsidize high-quality, off-base civilian care for military families through an effort called "Military Child Care In Your Neighborhood" and "Operation Military Child Care." The program provides subsidies to deployed families using licensed child care.

During FY09, Navy programs cared for more than 49,000 children ages six weeks to 12 years of age in 128 child development centers, 86 school-aged care programs and 3,115 on- and off-base licensed child development homes.

Beyond merely providing child care spaces, the Navy's Child and Youth Program provides services that significantly enhance the ability of our families to cope with the many demands of military life. Navy Child and Youth Programs partnered with NACCRRA last April to launch a new program that provides Navy families enrolled in the Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) up to 40 hours of respite care a month.

To date, more than 240 Navy families received respite care for their children with special needs enrolled in EFMP Categories 4 and 5.

According to Greg Young, Navy Child and Youth Program manager, "The respite care program allows the parent to leave their child, knowing that the provider is equipped to deal with their child's particular needs, and allows them some much needed time to for themselves." ■

Story by Bruce Moody, Commander, Navy Installations Command, Fleet and Family Support Program, Washington, D.C..

U.S. Military Sailors Compete in World Sailing Championship in Bahrain

Six U.S. Navy and Coast Guard Sailors comprising the U.S. Armed Forces Sailing Team recently competed against representatives from 25 countries at the 44th World Military Sailing Championship in the waters off the coast of Bahrain.

The U.S. team is part of the DoD Armed Forces Sports Program, which promotes goodwill and a positive image of the armed services through sports, encourages physical fitness by promoting a highly competitive sports program and provides the avenue for military athletes to participate in national and international competitions.

"Our main mission here in Bahrain is friendship through sport," explained Navy Cmdr. Jay Cavalieri, the U.S. team's captain. "It's a good way for us to engage in military-to-military ties."

Held for the first time in Bahrain, the World Military Sailing Championship was hosted by the International Military Sports Council, headquartered in Belgium and boasts 122 military member nations worldwide.

The U.S. team spent five days practicing in J/24 sailboats – the same type of craft used in the competition – in Key West, Fla., prior to the match races at the Bahrain Sailing Club's Al Jazayir beach.

The team members, who had been selected earlier this year by submitting resumes to the DoD Armed Forces Sports Program, had never met before their first practice.

"We had a coached practice every day," recalled team member Airman Michael Fleck,



Instructors from the Navy Child Development Center Naval Support Activity Bahrain, escort children on their daily morning walk on the base. The center held a grand opening in January to support Sailors who bring their families when reporting for duty at NSA Bahrain.



The U.S. Armed Forces Sailing Team, made up of Navy and Coast Guard Sailors, compete in the 44th World Military Sailing Championship off the coast of Zallaq, Bahrain.

stationed aboard USS *Constitution* in Charlestown, Mass. “We worked on a variety of drills, upwind and downwind, and we did some one-on-one practice competing against another boat in match racing.

“The J/24 is a very tricky boat to sail. It has a fairly short keel, so you have to keep a few factors in mind when racing, such as weight management of the boat and keeping the sails trimmed correctly. To truly sail it well you have to have a lot of practice and have a good feel for the boat.”

The single-masted J/24 boat is 24 feet long, weighs more than 3,000 pounds and carries three sails.

“For some of us, it was the first time we had sailed this type of boat,” noted Cavalieri, a staff oceanographer at the Naval Mine and Anti-Submarine Warfare Command, San Diego. “The crew was assembled quickly, and we didn’t have a lot of time to practice.”

Although the American sailing team did win some of their races, overall they did not place high against many of their more skilled and experienced competitors.

“The competition is far beyond the scope of what I had imagined,” Fleck agreed. “To compete at this level has been a great opportunity for this team.” 🇺🇸

Story and photo by MC1(SW) Eric Brown, Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command/Commander, U.S. 5th Fleet, Zallaq, Bahrain.

“Partners for the Planet” Brings Key Stakeholders Together for Environmental Forum

The Navy’s Chief of Naval Operations Environmental Readiness Division (N-45) recently hosted “Partners for the Planet,” in Alexandria, Va.

The event brought together the U.S. Navy, environmental non-government organizations (NGOs), and other key stakeholders to discuss environmental topics of shared concern.

Short-term objectives of the forum were to increase NGO and other key stakeholder awareness of the Navy’s current and future environmental stewardship efforts, increase Navy leadership awareness of programs and initiatives led by the environmental community; and identify future partnering opportunities.

NGO participants included Endangered Species Coalition, The Nature Conservancy, Oceana, and Ocean Conservancy, among others. These organizations have had ongoing dialogues with the Navy on a number of environmental topics. Representatives from National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, United States Environmental Protection Agency, and Marine Mammal Commission also attended.

In addition to N-45, Navy participants included leadership and environmental staff from a wide range of Navy organizations, including but not limited to the Office of the Assistant

Secretary of the Navy for Environment, Chief of Naval Operations Shore Readiness Division, Office of the Oceanographer & Navigator of the Navy, Office of Naval Research, systems commands, fleets, and regions.

Communication with interested members of non-government organizations is a major priority for the Navy. N-45 intends to continue its work to strengthen ties between the Navy and the NGO community at the headquarters and fleet/regional levels. 🇺🇸

Story by Tracey Moriarty, Chief of Naval Operations Environmental Readiness Division, Washington, D.C

Carl Vinson Partners with Peru to Promote Maritime Security

USS *Carl Vinson* (CVN 70) and USS *Bunker Hill* (CG 52) recently conducted joint operations with Peruvian naval and air forces as part of *Southern Seas 2010*, a major component of U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command Partnership of the Americas.

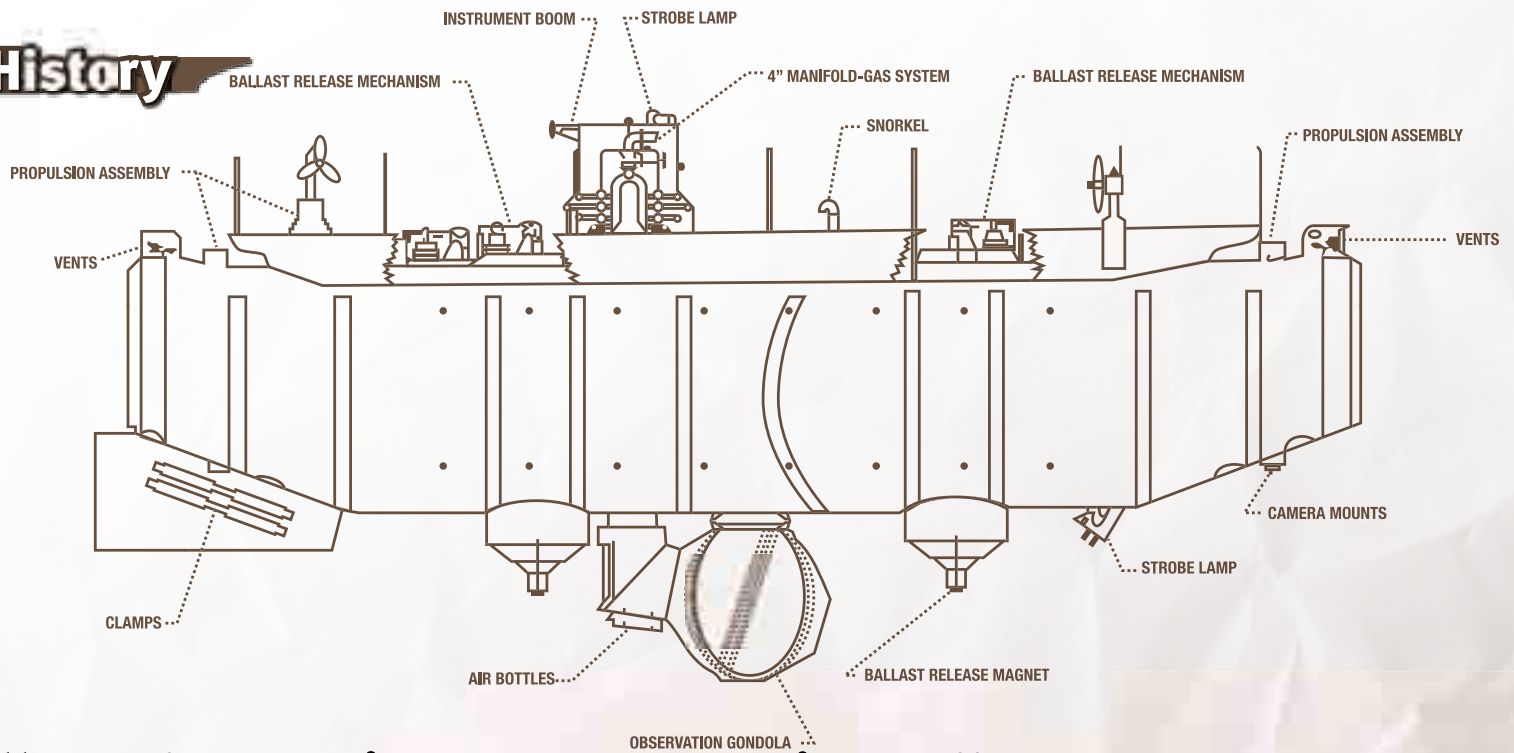
“The eight days of joint naval exercises with Peru were a great opportunity to realize the full potential of *Southern Seas 2010*,” said Rear Adm. Ted Branch, commander, Carrier Strike Group 1. “Together we will reinforce our commitments to the common goals of partnership, maritime security and stability.”

Additionally, *Carl Vinson* participated in a number of local community activities during a port call in Callao, Peru. The ship will also host visitors and media for tours.

“We had more than a week to engage in a meaningful, two-way flow of information,” said *Carl Vinson*’s Commanding Officer, Capt. Bruce H. Lindsey. “That’s an invaluable experience for both countries as we seek to enhance our interoperability. We look forward to our joint operations as well as learning from each other culturally during the social events together.”

Carl Vinson recently completed similar operations with Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina and Chile during the transit to her new home port in San Diego. 🇺🇸

Story by MC1 Jason Thompson, USS Carl Vinson (CVN 70).



“You’re Going Down, *Trieste*”

Story by MC2(SW) Elizabeth Vlahos

The Navy sunk to a new low Jan. 23, 1960 – but not in the way you think. On this date, the bathyscaphe *Trieste* dove 35,797 feet to the bottom of the Marianas Trench, the lowest point in the ocean.

The “Ocean Race” of the 1950s and 1960s was a vastly silent one for strategic control of the subsurface realm. Quiet achievements in the ocean were eclipsed by the flash and extravagance of the space race during the Cold War. But, *Trieste*’s voyage managed to pull the attention of the public away from the sky.

After a rough, 200-mile tow through seasonably rough seas, *Trieste* and her tow vessel, USS *Wandank* (ATA 204), arrived at their dive site, seven miles above the seafloor. The two people making the journey, Lt. Don Walsh and Jacques Piccard, had to wait more than an hour to board *Trieste* due to 20-foot-high waves.

A few hours earlier, the destroyer USS *Lewis* (DE 535) completed a depth survey. By exploding 800 sticks of TNT, and listening for an echo return, her crew located the Marianas Trench’s deepest point, the Challenger Deep. The longest echo return was 14 seconds long, and *Trieste* was positioned right above.

At 8 a.m., Piccard and Walsh left their tow vessel to board *Trieste*. The two found the bathyscaphe had apparently suffered minor damage during the rough transit to the descent point, but they decided to dive anyway, since they might not have another chance. Once *Trieste*’s water ballast tanks were flooded, the great bathyscaphe began the historic descent. The trip to the floor of the Marianas Trench took them from the sunlit world to the ebony-black abyss of

the “hadal zone,” beginning at approximately 20,000 feet. This was unknown territory for any manned vehicle.

At 32,400 feet, *Trieste* was shaken by a loud, but muffled explosion. The cause was later determined to be the cracking of a window in *Trieste*’s entrance tunnel. Piccard and Walsh began to worry about what had happened to the battered bathyscaphe and wondered if they should abort the descent. They checked the instruments to find the sink rate remained unchanged, suggesting any damage they suffered was minor.

Five hours after leaving the surface, *Trieste* settled on the bottom of Challenger Deep and came to rest at a depth of 35,797 feet. Piccard spotted a flatfish scooting across the sea floor, proving the existence of life in the ocean’s greatest depths. After 20 minutes on the sea floor, making observations and scientific measurements, *Trieste* released 16 tons of water from her ballast tanks and began the return ascent.

She broke the surface shortly before 5 p.m., and Walsh gently emptied the entrance tunnel with compressed air. The cracked window held, and Walsh and Piccard were relieved to discover that they were not trapped inside the pressure sphere. As they left the bathyscaphe, Piccard and Walsh were greeted by a pair of Navy jets dipping their wings in salute to *Trieste* and her crew.

It’s sobering to think that no manned submersible vessel in operation today can match *Trieste*’s record depth. Robots aside, nobody has returned to Challenger Deep and with good reason. The depths of the planet’s ocean trenches are inhospitable to both man and machine. Despite this severe reality, Walsh and Piccard achieved a remarkable feat in attaining an unbroken record and demonstrating to the Navy that no part of the ocean is beyond reach. *Trieste*’s daring feat, though never duplicated, shaped the future of manned deep submergence. 🇺🇸

Vlahos is assigned to Defense Media Activity – Anacostia, Washington, D.C.

OSC(SW/AW) Robert C. Laird Jr.

Story by MC2(SCW) Brian Coverley

Individual augmentee (IA) billets and tours aren't a requisite for first class petty officers to make chief, but they certainly can help to strengthen a Sailor's profile, making him or her "a cut above the rest" and more suitable for selection. Chief Operations Specialist (SW/AW) Robert C. Laird's story demonstrates this very point.

OS1 Laird was assigned to Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, from February to October 2007 serving as Joint Operations Center liaison officer for Joint Task Force (JTF) Paladin. Like other U.S. service members and their NATO counterparts, Laird's biggest concern while in Afghanistan was improvised explosive devices (IEDs).

"I was responsible for tracking, reporting and briefing all IED incidents throughout the Afghanistan Area of Responsibility. [I also had to] deploy various U.S. and NATO explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) teams throughout Afghanistan to exploit the various IED sites for further gathering and processing of information," said Laird.

"I am currently stationed aboard USS *Vicksburg* (CG 69) in Mayport, Fla., as the operations intelligence leading chief petty officer," said Laird.

"As an operations specialist, my primary job is to track, report, display, evaluate and disseminate various types of tactical information throughout the ship and to warfare coordinators."

Vicksburg is currently part of the Navy's ready and responsive surface warfare assets to project power and provide maritime security. *Vicksburg's* Aegis system ensures that threats can be seen and dealt with from miles away.

In Afghanistan, such a distant and detached style of warfare doesn't work. The enemy often remains invisible until an IED detonates.

"My [operations specialist] training paid dividends and made it a smooth transition while performing my duties [in Afghanistan]," said Laird.



Laird's outlook on how to lead changed because of his IA experience. "Having been an IA doesn't necessarily make me a better chief or a better leader - it just gives me another tool to provide to my Sailors. Leadership is something that you spread throughout the deckplates daily that may not have a direct effect on a Sailor until later in their career," he said.

"As I look back at my most rewarding tour in my Navy career - being an IA - I think the most important tool that I took away from it and use on a daily basis is that you can't take life for granted. So many of our great [service] members have paid the ultimate sacrifice in defense of our daily freedoms. ... I put this out to my Sailors daily. Although we work long hours and complete various tasks - somewhere, in some place - others are doing things under worse [circumstances]." 🇺🇸

Coverley is assigned to Defense Media Activity - Anacostia, Washington, D.C.

IT'S YOUR MOVE

**SMART WEB
MOVE**

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